

Intercultural communication

Christopher Michael Cannon

Grand Canyon university

Dr Matthew drumheller

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Yoruban Gangbusters

Alright, gang, let's pull back the curtain on a mystery that's been hiding in plain sight—how a culture's way of communicating can carry the weight of its entire history, values, and beliefs. Now, picture this: you're in bustling Lagos, Nigeria, a city where the old and the new are locked in a vibrant dance. You might not know it but a song you hear somehow tells you and Amid that buzz of modern life, there's a hidden code that guides how people interact for the length of the song you can see it pass down knowledge, like the matrix code. No, it's not some secret society or ancient spell—it's the rich tapestry of Yoruba communication patterns.

This exploration takes us into the heart of Yoruba life, where every word, gesture, and tale carries the weight of history and the promise of continuity. The study delves into how proverbs encapsulate cultural wisdom, how storytelling preserves identity, and how non-verbal cues strengthen bonds within the community.

By peeling back the layers of Yoruba communication patterns, this research reveals their enduring significance in a rapidly changing world, showing how they preserve cultural heritage, reinforce social norms, and remain central to Yoruba identity in contemporary Nigerian society. But here's where the plot thickens: as Lagos grows into a global hub, urbanization and globalization challenge these age-old practices, forcing them to adapt or risk fading into obscurity.

Role of Children in Yoruba Society

Picture this: a bustling Yoruba village, where the laughter of children echoes through the streets and every adult carries a story but some, the silent understanding that these young ones are the future. For the Yoruba, children are more than a source of joy—they are the society's greatest

investment. (Akinyemi, 2003) emphasizes that Yoruba culture views children as the lifeblood of societal continuity, entrusted with preserving traditions and ensuring a vibrant future.

This reverence for children is captured in proverbs, which are vital tools for cultural transmission. Take, for instance, the saying *Omo beere, osi beere* —“too many children lead to impoverishment” (Akinyemi, 2003). While valuing children, the Yoruba acknowledge the importance of balance and responsibility in parenting. Another proverb, *Omo ti a o ko, ni yoo gbe ile ti a ko ta*—“a child not well-socialized will squander the family’s wealth”—drives home the critical need for proper upbringing. These sayings are not mere words but guiding principles for parents and communities to nurture children into responsible custodians of Yoruba values.

The Omoluabi Concept

And here’s where things get even more interesting: the Yoruba concept of *omoluabi*. Imagine a person who embodies kindness, respect, and unshakable integrity—this is the *omoluabi*, a cornerstone of Yoruba cultural identity. Awoniyi (1975) explains that being an *omoluabi* isn’t just about good

manners; it's about embodying the ideals of a morally upright and socially responsible individual.

But how does one become an omoluabi? The journey begins within the family. Parents and elders play an active role in instilling discipline and ethical behavior, ensuring that children internalize these values. (Akinyemi, 2003) notes that this character formation extends beyond the family into the community, where social norms and communal expectations reinforce the omoluabi ideal. It's a shared responsibility, creating a society where individuals thrive not just for themselves but for the collective good.

Communication Patterns in Yoruba Culture

So here's the scoop: Yoruba proverbs aren't just words—they're like cultural cheat codes, packed with wisdom to guide behavior and teach moral lessons. (Makinde, 2004) calls proverbs the "soul" of Yoruba communication, seamlessly blending entertainment with education. Imagine sitting with an elder who drops a saying like, *A kii f'owo kan t'oko meji*—"You cannot handle two things at once." Now imagine he has a tabala hand drum and a whip and starts a dialog with you and your cousins with a little crack of it!! At first, it

sounds simple, but peel back the layers, but by the time he adds in a couple measures on hand drum added arpeggios it has unfolded into some magical reminder of the importance of focus and responsibility. Somehow. He's both exemplifies his statement and contradicts it; the thought, what could only be interpreted as a statement of wit and power. It often times take a wise elder to make these most impactful of characterizations.

Proverbs like these aren't limited to personal growth; they also foster a sense of community. (Orie, 2011) highlights the saying *Ile lati n k'eso r'ode*—"Charity begins at home"—as a call to prioritize family and community welfare. Whether advising on hard work, respect, or cooperation, Yoruba proverbs are a toolbox for building character and strengthening social bonds. It's like solving a mystery where every phrase uncovers a new lesson about life, morality, and communal harmony.

Storytelling as Cultural Education

Now, let's shift gears to storytelling—because who doesn't love a good tale? For the Yoruba, storytelling is more than a pastime; it's a vibrant stage where history, morals, and identity come to life. (Bernard, 2015) notes that

these oral traditions are central to preserving Yoruba history and social norms, handed down from one generation to the next. Picture an evening under a starlit sky, where children gather around an elder who spins tales of trickster animals and heroic ancestors. It's not just entertainment—it's education wrapped in imagination.

These stories aren't random; they're crafted to teach life lessons. For instance, tales about *ljàpá* (the tortoise) often focus on wit and consequence, showing how cleverness can be both a gift and a curse. Storytelling also serves as a tool for conflict resolution, using metaphors and allegories to teach forgiveness, empathy, and collaboration. Gathering clues—every story reveals a deeper truth about how to navigate life's challenges while staying true to Yoruba values.

Non-Verbal Communication

And here's where things get really fascinating: Yoruba non-verbal communication. Imagine walking into a room, and instead of a greeting, a subtle nod or hand gesture says everything you need to know. (Bernard,

2015) describes the Yoruba mastery of symbols, gestures, and body language as a silent but powerful language that complements spoken words.

Take, for example, the act of prostrating or kneeling during greetings—a universal sign of respect in Yoruba culture. Or consider the deliberate use of eye contact: maintaining it conveys sincerity, while avoiding it might signal deference or embarrassment. Even silence holds meaning, often used to show disagreement or to encourage reflection. These non-verbal cues are like hidden messages that only those attuned to the culture can decode. It's a dynamic system where every movement has purpose, reinforcing the Yoruba commitment to respect, clarity, and community.

Proverbs, storytelling, and non-verbal cues are more than just communication tools—they're the heartbeat of Yoruba culture. Whether spoken or unspoken, each pattern carries a message of morality, responsibility, and shared humanity. It's a mystery worth unraveling, revealing how these timeless practices keep Yoruba identity alive in a modern world.

Changes in Traditional Practices

Here's dynamite, folks: as Yoruba culture collides with the fast-paced world of urbanization and globalization, some traditional practices are facing challenges. Urbanization has transformed family structures, shifting from tight-knit extended families to nuclear households in cities like Lagos. This shift has impacted how cultural values are passed down. Where once children learned proverbs and stories at their grandparents' knees, they now spend more time on smartphones and less time engaged with elders (Akinyemi, 2003).

Traditional storytelling, once the cornerstone of moral and cultural education, is also losing its prominence. (Bernard, 2015) highlights the rise of digital communication, where memes and WhatsApp forwards often replace oral tales. While technology has opened new avenues for connection, it has also created a gap in the transmission of cultural wisdom. It's a bit like losing a key clue in a mystery—without these practices, the cultural continuity of Yoruba identity risks unraveling.

Zoinks! Yoruba culture in a rift?! It's loko, like I always say and they have to be very resilient. Efforts are underway to adapt and preserve these traditions in modern contexts. For example, Yoruba proverbs and folktales have found new life in classrooms and educational programs. Teachers

incorporate these timeless lessons into curriculums to instill cultural pride and moral values in young learners (Makinde, 2004).

Ha ha and The media has also stepped up, with Yoruba films, podcasts, and YouTube channels reimagining traditional stories for contemporary audiences. Festivals like the Lagos Book and Arts Festival feature storytelling sessions and performances that celebrate Yoruba heritage while appealing to a modern crowd. These efforts show how Yoruba culture continues to evolve, embracing innovation without losing its essence. It's like taking an old mystery-solving van and giving it a high-tech upgrade—it's still the same van, but now it can navigate new terrains.

Case Studies and Examples of Proverbs in Modern Contexts

Now, here's where things get exciting: Yoruba proverbs aren't just relics of the past—they're alive and thriving in unexpected ways. In political discourse, leaders often quote proverbs to appeal to cultural pride and reinforce messages. For instance, during campaign speeches, it's not uncommon to hear something like *Eni ti o ko ohun ti oun ni, yoo padanu*

ohun ti awon miiran ni—"One who fails to nurture their own will lose what others have." It's a strategic move to connect with audiences through shared cultural values (Orie, 2011).

Proverbs also show up in popular media, like Nollywood films and music lyrics, where they add depth and cultural richness. They're not just throwaway lines; they ground stories in Yoruba identity, making the messages resonate with local and global audiences alike. It's a clever way of keeping the cultural flame burning while reaching a wider audience.

Cultural Festivals and Practices

Finally, let's talk festivals. If you want to see Yoruba communication traditions in action, festivals like Eyo and Osun-Osogbo are the places to be. These events are cultural spectacles, blending music, dance, and rituals with storytelling and symbolic gestures. As Bernard (2015) notes, such festivals play a crucial role in reinforcing communal bonds and passing down traditions.

Even in a modernized Lagos, these festivals draw crowds from around the world, showing that Yoruba culture isn't just surviving—it's thriving. They're like cultural treasure chests, showcasing how proverbs, stories, and non-verbal communication remain central to Yoruba identity. Festivals remind us that even as the world changes, some mysteries—like the enduring power of culture—are worth celebrating.

Conclusion

Well, gang, it looks like we've unmasked the mystery of Yoruba communication practices—and guess what? They're anything but old-fashioned or outdated. Much like a Scooby snack-powered clue, these traditions hold the keys to understanding how a culture thrives, adapts, and stays true to itself.

Yoruba proverbs act like the breadcrumbs leading us to the heart of their values—reminding us to stay focused, prioritize community, and live with integrity. Their storytelling? It's like the original Scooby-Doo episodes, packed with lessons wrapped in entertainment, always teaching us something about cleverness, collaboration, or courage. And don't forget their

non-verbal cues—a silent but powerful language that’s as effective as Daphne’s intuition or Velma’s “jinkies” moment.

Even with the challenges of a modern, fast-paced world, the Yoruba have shown they can adapt without losing what makes them special. Their culture continues to evolve while keeping its timeless wisdom alive—proof that some mysteries, like the power of tradition, are worth holding onto. So, as we pull off the proverbial mask, we don’t find something scary, but rather something inspiring: a culture built on connection, storytelling, and resilience.

And if you ask me folks, that’s a cultural mystery solved!

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